

The '39 Parallel?

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Published November 27, 2006 in THE WASHINGTON TIMES

On August 23, 1939, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov stunned the world by signing the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact under the watchful eyes of German Foreign Minister Joachim Von Ribbentrop and Soviet leader Josef Stalin. With the sweep of a pen Soviet Russia paved the way for the beginning of World War II by assuring Hitler he would not have to fight a war on two fronts. That error in judgment cost roughly 62 million people across the globe their lives; including 6 million Jews and 23 million Russians.

Sixty-seven years later it seems that once again, Russia has yielded to the destructive ambitions of a tyrant and an anti-Semite. By refusing to support tough sanctions on Iran over its dangerous nuclear enrichment program, Russia is once again exposing the world to unimaginable carnage, certainly much worse than that of World War II. While Russia's failure to learn from history is particularly shocking, and has made it the chief stumbling block to the UN confronting Iran, it is not alone in averting its gaze from the pending disaster, as detailed below.

Tehran claims its nuclear program is a peaceful one, designed to generate electricity, but many outside experts and leaders acknowledge that Iran is attempting to achieve a nuclear weapons capability. Even the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says it cannot verify that Iran's program – concealed from U.N. inspectors for many years – is purely peaceful. In fact, the IAEA stated in its reports of January 31, 2006, and February 27, 2006, that documents found by IAEA inspectors show a possible "military nuclear dimension" to Iran's program.

But is the world acting to end this threat? Clearly not. Instead, the United Nations, Russia, China, the European Union, many in Congress, and some high ranking officials in the State Department all believe that we can negotiate with Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Of greater concern, the Iraq Study Group, chaired by James Baker and Lee Hamilton, is expected to make similar recommendations as the centerpiece of its broadly-anticipated blueprint for turning the course in Iraq. All of these people seem to believe that Ahmadinejad can be persuaded to give up his nuclear ambitions. Similarly, in September 1938, the great European powers and the League of Nations believed that Adolf Hitler could be persuaded to give up his ambition of conquest by simply giving him Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland. However, almost exactly a year later Hitler derided the agreement as just a "scrap of paper" and invaded Poland igniting World War II.

The proponents of appeasement failed the world in 1939 and the proponents of appeasement will also fail today. Namely, those political leaders here at home and abroad who preach "dialogue" with Iran and rapid redeployment from Iraq, based on an artificial timetable, and regardless of the situation left behind, are risking making the same big mistake. Such a move will undoubtedly be viewed as a victory in Tehran, just as Hitler viewed the Munich Agreement as a major victory that confirmed his impression

of a world unwilling to stop his march. Unfortunately for the world, this is the nuclear age and the consequences of failure this time around could literally bring the end of civilization.

To Hitler the process of diplomacy was only a farce to prevent sanctions that would constrain Germany's rearmament and her preparations for war. Every withdrawal by the allies simply served to strengthen Hitler's determination to conquer. Similarly, to Iranian president Ahmadinejad the process of diplomacy is simply a facade meant to prevent sanctions that would constrain Iran's nuclear weapons development and her preparations for war. And make no mistake, Iran is not only preparing for war, but preparing to carry out a new Holocaust, perhaps more destructive than the last one (which Ahmadinejad despicably denies, even while the last of its survivors still walk the Earth).

The proof can be found in Ahmadinejad's own words. On October 26, 2005, Ahmadinejad stated at a Tehran conference entitled 'A World Without Zionism' that "Israel should be wiped off the map" and that "anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nations' fury." On December 9, 2005, and then again on December 14, 2005, and May 28, 2006, he questioned the veracity of the Holocaust. In the December 14 case, he called it a "myth" -- and stated that Europe should create a Jewish state in Europe, not in the Middle East.

To mark 'Quds' day on October 20 – an Iranian 'holiday' calling for war against Israel under the premise of "liberation" of Jerusalem – Iranian newspapers Kehyan and Resalat, both controlled by the government, published editorials urging Muslims around the world to prepare for a 'great war' to destroy the State of Israel.

I agree with Israeli Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu who said recently that Tehran's nuclear and missile program "goes way beyond the destruction of Israel - it is directed to achieve world-wide range. It's a global program in the service of a mad ideology." He went on to say, "Israel would certainly be the first stop on Iran's tour of destruction, but at the planned production rate of 25 nuclear bombs a year ... [the arsenal] will be directed against 'the big Satan,' the U.S., and the 'moderate Satan,' Europe."

No one cared to imagine the worst in 1939, and many seem unprepared to imagine the worst now, and once again millions of innocent people could pay the price for our folly. History has looked back upon 1938 and 1939 as one of the great "ifs" of the 20th century: If only the allies had stood up to Hitler; if only the Soviet Union hadn't signed the non-aggression pact with Hitler. I do not want history to look back upon 2006 and 2007 – assuming there is a civilization capable of looking back – as the great "if" of the 21st century. Have we not learned from so-recent a history with so many parallels?

There is still time for the world to wake up and realize that no conceivable carrot will persuade the leadership in Tehran not to acquire nuclear weapons. If allowed to, it will surely use them as leverage to impose its will and, in the end, deploy them to unleash an apocalypse. We must summon the political will and vision to do whatever it takes to

eliminate Tehran's nuclear program now. If we wait additional years, our capability to stop these nuclear madmen will simply cease to exist.